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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: STAS DR. NINA FEDOROFF PROMOTES SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY WITH BIOTECHNOLOGY

REF: 09 BRASILIA 1120; 09 BRASILIA 1175

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Dr. Nina Fedoroff, Science and Technology Advisor for the Secretary of State and USAID (STAS) visited Brazil on October 25-30. In her meetings in Sao Paulo, Brasilia, and Rio de Janeiro with academics, private sector representatives, and government officials she promoted increased science and technology cooperation, with a particular focus on reducing barriers to such cooperation, agricultural biotechnology, trilateral cooperation in developing countries, and the Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology (JCM) that subsequently took place in Washington, D.C. on November 19-20. Dr. Fedoroff's visit was productive and generated interest across all sectors in increasing science and technology cooperation between Brazil and the United States. She also generated a considerable amount of enthusiasm and interest in the JCM - helping to open doors and to encourage participation by the key principals; without whom the JCM would suffer from a lack of political clout. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Throughout her visit Dr. Fedoroff consistently had productive and engaging meetings with a wide variety of interlocutors covering the gamut of areas in which Brazilian and U.S. scientists and technical (S&T) agencies are cooperating. She stressed to her Brazilian counterparts that the United States and Brazil should be cooperating as partners and that both countries have much to learn from each others' experiences. She was careful to stress that the United States has not overcome all of the obstacles that stand in the way of innovation, has not created a perfect regulatory system that will address all of science's future advances, and has not yet removed all of the barriers that exist to cooperation between U.S. agencies or scientists and their foreign counterparts. While the United States may have competitive advantages in some areas, there are others in which it has much to learn from partners like Brazil.

#### JOINT COMMISSION MEETING ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

¶3. (SBU) Dr. Fedoroff's visit corresponded with the run-up to the U.S. - Brazil Joint Commission Meeting on Science and Technology (JCM), which subsequently took place on November 19-20 in Washington, D.C. Dr. Fedoroff's meeting with the JCM's Brazilian Delegation Head, Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Sergio Rezende, came on the heels of a meeting between Min. Rezende and the Director of the National Science Foundation, Dr. Arden Bement,

which prompted the Minister to focus on the JCM. Dr. Fedoroff's meeting spurred Min. Rezende personally to recruit high-level government officials to participate in the JCM delegation. During the meeting, Min. Rezende was visibly excited and engaged. Min. Rezende made it clear that he expected the JCM to be a great opportunity to expand the U.S. - Brazil science and technology relationship.

¶4. (SBU) During their meeting Min. Rezende also pointed out that in his view Brazilian scientific ties are stronger with the United States than with any other country. According to the Ministry's analysis, the scientific ties between the United States and Brazil are three times greater than their ties with France or the United Kingdom. (NOTE: Min. Rezende did not give any indication as to how these figures were calculated.) Given the already strong ties, Min. Rezende and Dr. Fedoroff agreed that the best way to build upon them was to concentrate on removing barriers to cooperative research and providing funding to increase the quantity and scale. While Brazil's scientific ties are stronger with the United States than any other country, however, CAPES (the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education) President Jorge Guimaraes informed Dr. Fedoroff that Brazil is increasing its engagement through numerous education programs with countries such as France, Germany, Portugal, Great Britain, Spain, Holland and Sweden.

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#### BARRIERS TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

¶5. (SBU) A common theme during Dr. Fedoroff's visit was the idea of removing barriers to science cooperation. These barriers can take many forms, ranging from bureaucratic hurdles - which have been a consistent concern in joint biomedical research - to research permissions, and visa processes and fees. Dr. Fedoroff consistently relayed the message that given the strong level of interest at a technical-level, both governments need to find ways to remove unnecessary barriers that prevent researchers from being able to work together. She suggested assembling funds from all agencies into a common pool that would create a funding base for S&T collaboration.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Hadil Vianna, the Director of the Department of Science and Technology at the Ministry of External Relations, made a comment that was telling about the Government of Brazil's (GOB) view of government's central role in science and technology cooperation. In response to a comment by Dr. Fedoroff about removing barriers, he asked how the government would be able to monitor and track all the international cooperation taking place in the country if the government did not insert itself more into the review process.

#### AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AND FOOD SECURITY

¶7. (SBU) The topics of biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) figured prominently in Dr. Fedoroff's discussions with counterparts from the GOB and the private sector. Per REFTEL A, the GOB is becoming more accepting of the use of GMOs and the importance of agricultural biotechnology. Dr. Fedoroff was quick to point out that while the USG does have a functioning science-based approach to regulating biotechnology and genetically modified organisms, our system is not perfect. She praised Brazil's efforts for having a single regulatory body to deal with these issues. She also pointed out that in many ways the GOB's approach and interest in GMOs is much more aligned with that of the USG than with Europe. Given Brazil's cultural and linguistic ties to some African nations, GMOs and agricultural biotechnology are

areas in which our two countries can work together to influence the development of biotechnology policies and acceptance in Africa. Private sector representatives highlighted the disconnect between the private and public sectors. Due to difficulty, costs, and timing of approvals for release, crop development is usually done by private companies.

¶8. (SBU) Dr. Fedoroff repeatedly made the observation that the world needs to urgently develop alternative crops, as well as to make incremental changes in heat and drought resistance, in order to address rapid forthcoming climate change. She also urged scientists from both countries to think out of the box and develop completely different methods of agriculture, like desert or saline agriculture.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

¶9. (SBU) The upcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations that will take place in Copenhagen in December have focused much of the recent climate-related conversations on the creation of a post-Kyoto agreement. However, in conversations with her Brazilian counterparts, Dr. Fedoroff discussed the variety of technical-level scientific cooperation on climate science that has taken place in Brazil, as well as the potential for future cooperation in this area.

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#### TRILATERAL COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

¶10. (SBU) The potential for the USG and the GOB to cooperate in agriculture and biotechnology also led to consideration of possible tri-lateral cooperation on food security in Africa and other developing nations. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) - Brazil's USAID equivalent - has food security projects in a variety of African nations, and the Brazilian Corporation for Agricultural Research has established a variety of research facilities in Africa as well. ABC and USAID have already begun to cooperate in some of these areas, and the Brazilians have expressed interest in continuing this trend. Dr. Fedoroff also met with the Minister of Agriculture Reinhold Stephanes and emphasized the importance of Brazil using its presence and experience in Africa to positively influence acceptance of agricultural biotechnology.

¶11. (SBU) The Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ), Brazil's NIH equivalent, is also interested in cooperating trilaterally in the field of public health. FIOCRUZ expressed a desire to work with USG technical agencies in order to support the development of National Public Health Institutes in developing countries.

¶12. (SBU) Climate science, specifically with respect to remote sensing and earth observation, is yet another area in which the USG and the GOB could cooperate in providing assistance to third countries. The Brazilians have developed an impressive capacity to analyze and interpret satellite imagery as part of their program to monitor Amazon deforestation. Combining this capacity with U.S. expertise in imaging and analysis, our two countries could help other developing nations to measure the impact of their environmental policies on deforestation and other types of environmental degradation. Per Professor Jose Goldemberg, a noted expert on biofuels and climate change at the University of Sao Paulo, the Ministry of External Relations does not fully grasp the gravity of the challenges that lie ahead.

## INNOVATION

¶13. (SBU) Much of the GOB, particularly technical agencies and the Ministry of Science and Technology, places innovation near the top of their agendas (see REFTEL B). As a result, many of Dr. Fedoroff's meetings focused on how to better promote innovation in Brazil. Many of her counterparts, including ones that have previously questioned the link between innovation and intellectual property rights, cited the difference between Brazilian contributions to peer reviewed scientific articles (2% of worldwide production) and Brazil's share of worldwide patents (0.2%) as a demonstration of the problem that exists. Dr. Fedoroff pointed out that innovation is a very large topic, and that perhaps more focus was required on the one or two specific parts of the innovation continuum that presented the largest challenge to Brazil. Members of the academic community identified the lack of a solid legal framework that incentivizes spin-offs and academic-private sector partnerships; a lack of venture capital and angel funding; and a lack of the recognition of the value of knowledge and intellectual property rights as key problems that Brazil faces in this realm. Director of Sao Paulo State's prominent scientific foundation (FAPESP) Carlos Brito Cruz specifically suggested to Dr. Fedoroff that the United States and Brazil look at ways to reduce bureaucratic barriers to the scientific grant-making process to encourage more collaboration on innovation.

¶14. (SBU) The President of the National Funder of Studies and Projects (FINEP), Luiz Fernandes, talked with Dr. Fedoroff about their recent focus on Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) programs as one way in which the GOB is trying to bridge this gap. Dr. Fedoroff suggested that beyond governmental funding agencies, it could be useful to engage some non-governmental groups, such as the Kauffman Foundation, which have been very successful in helping identify gaps in the innovation continuum and developing ideas for how to address these gaps.

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¶15. (U) This cable was cleared with Dr. Fedoroff and received input from Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

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